

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
MCE-00 COME-00 EB-08 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /075 W  
-----011340 040133Z /64

R 031439Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4166  
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI  
AMEMBASSY OSLO  
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK  
AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: MASS, SW  
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE SWEDISH-ITALIAN COLLABORATION ON NEW FIGHTER  
AIRCRAFT AND THE STATUS OF THE B3LA

1. SWEDISH DEFENSE MINISTER ERIC KRONMARK (MODERATE PARTY),  
IN A JULY 2 INTERVIEW WITH DAGENS NYHETER, SAID THAT SWEDEN  
IS STUDYING THE IDEA OF A JOINT SWEDISH-ITALIAN LIGHT ATTACK  
AIRCRAFT. A REPORT ON THE TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY OF THE PLAN  
IS EXPECTED IN AUGUST. ACCORDING TO KRONMARK, THE ITALIAN  
CONCEPT OF A LIGHT STRIKE AIRCRAFT IS SUPRISINGLY SIMILAR  
TO THAT OF SWEDISH PLANNERS. A JOINT EFFORT WOULD HAVE  
SWEDEN DEVELOPING TWO OR THREE OF THE TECHNICAL SECTORS AS WELL  
AS MANUFACTURING UNDER LICENSE AN ENGINE OF PART-ITALIAN  
DESIGN.

2. AS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTROVERSIAL B3LA, THE  
GOVERNMENT WILL AWAIT THE REPORT, DUE IN OCTOBER, OF  
THE AVIATION INDUSTRY INVESTIGATING COMMISSION BEFORE  
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RENDERING ITS FINAL LONG-AWAITED DECISION. THE  
COMMISSION IS LOOKING INTO THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF B3LA  
ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING DEVELOPMENT OF THE A-20, LICENSED  
MANUFACTURE OF A FOREIGN AIRCRAFT, OR OUTRIGHT PURCHASE  
OF A FOREIGN-MADE MODEL. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, WHO HAVE  
BEEN DECISIVELY OPPOSED TO GOING AHEAD WITH THE B3LA,  
HAVE BEEN JOINED IN OPPOSITION BY THE CENTER PARTY YOUTH

AND ELEMENTS OF THE LIBERAL PARTY. AT THE RECENT CENTER PARTY CONGRESS, PM FALLDIN HIMSELF RAISED SOME QUESTIONS REGARDING B3LA FUNDING. NONETHELESS, KRONMARK INSISTED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO DISSENTING VOICES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ON B3LA POLICY TO DATE.

3. KRONMARK NOTED THAT A DECISION ON AN ENGINE FOR THE B3LA HAS BEEN DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS. THE COMPETITORS REMAIN THE EUROPEAN TORNADO AND GE'S F404. THE PRATT AND WHITNEY MODEL IS OUT OF THE RUNNING. POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WILL BE FACTORED INTO A DECISION ON WHETHER TO USE AN AMERICAN OR EUROPEAN ENGINE, KRNO MARK ADDED.

4. KRONMARK INSISTED THAT A DECISION ON THE B3LA WILL NOT BE POSTPONED BEYOND AUTUMN. PREVIOUS POSTPONEMENTS HAVE ALREADY COST THE GOVERNMENT 400 MILLION KRONER. FURTHER POSTPONEMENTS WOULD RUN THE BILL UP EVEN HIGHER.

5. COMMENT: EVEN KRONMARK, A STRONG BACKER OF THE B3LA PROJECT, RECOGNIZES THAT ODDS ARE NO BETTER THAN 50:50 FOR THE GO-AHEAD DECISION. KRONMARK WOULD NO DOUBT FAVOR A SWEDISH B3LA OVER A SWEDISH-ITALIAN JOINT VENTURE, BUT NOW SEES TO BE LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD THE FINAL DECISION BE NEGATIVE. WITH CRACKS BEGINNING TO APPEAR IN THE GOVERNMENT COALITION, AND A STONE-WALL OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPPOSITION, B3LA ADVOCATES HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO HEDGE BETS.  
KENNEDY-MINOTT

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 03 jul 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**To:** STATE  
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